

1 THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR
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7 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
8 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
9 AT SEATTLE

10 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

11 Plaintiff,

12 v.

13 FIDEL MARS GONZALEZ,

14 Defendant.

CASE NO. CR21-0164-JCC

ORDER

15 This matter comes before the Court on Defendant Fidel Mars Gonzalez's unopposed
16 motion for authorization to conduct his plea hearing by videoconference. (Dkt. No. 20.) Having
17 thoroughly considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court hereby GRANTS the motion
18 for the reasons explained below.

19 Under General Order 04-20, felony pleas and sentencing may proceed by video or
20 telephone conferencing if "the district judge in a particular case finds for specific reasons that the
21 plea or sentencing in that case cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of
22 justice." *See also* W.D. Wash. General Order 14-21 (Dec. 22, 2021) (extending the duration of
23 General Order 04-20).

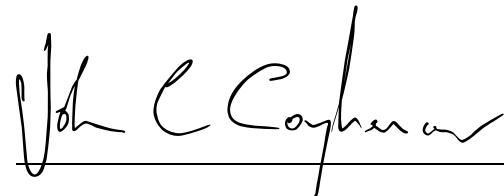
24 Having thoroughly considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court FINDS that
25 further delay in the absence of a video plea hearing would seriously harm the interests of justice.
26 The following specific reasons support this finding: (1) A jury trial is scheduled for March 21,

1 2022, and the pretrial motions deadline has already passed, (*see* Dkt. No. 19); (2) not permitting
2 a video plea hearing could unnecessarily delay Mr. Gonzalez's sentencing (*see* Dkt. No. 20 at 2);
3 and (3) the Government does not oppose the request.

4 It is therefore ORDERED that Mr. Gonzalez's motion (Dkt. No. 20) is GRANTED. The
5 parties will contact the courtroom deputy for the criminal duty Magistrate Judge to schedule the
6 plea hearing. The Magistrate Judge is DIRECTED to make a record of Mr. Gonzalez's consent
7 to a remote proceeding.

8 DATED this 9th day of February 2022.

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John C. Coughenour
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE